First health checks of SuperCam on Mars

March 9, 2021

MEDIA ADVISORY: News conference

LOS ALAMOS, N.M., March 9, 2021—Los Alamos National Laboratory and France's National Centre for Space Studies (CNES) will hold an online press conference on Wednesday, March 10, to assess the health of SuperCam, the rock-zapping laser that was developed under the auspices of the two institutions and is now on board the NASA Perseverance rover on the surface of Mars.

WHEN: Wednesday, March 10, 2021, 9 a.m. Pacific/10 a.m. Mountain/12 noon Eastern (briefing in English)

WHERE: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DAhLuUnDwE

WHO: Jean-Yves Le Gall, CNES President; Roger Wiens, Los Alamos National Laboratory SuperCam Principal Investigator; Ann Ollila, Los Alamos National Laboratory Scientist; Naomi Murdoch, ISAE-SUPAERO Professor; Scott Robinson, Los Alamos National Laboratory SuperCam Instrument Manager; and Thomas Zurbuchen, NASA Associate Administrator for the Science Mission Directorate

Located at the top of the mast of the Perseverance rover, SuperCam is currently undergoing a series of tests designed to verify the operating status of all of its systems. SuperCam's tests are part of an overall rover check-out phase which will last about three months.

Hailed by NASA as a "Swiss Army Knife" of instruments, SuperCam brings together five ambitious remote techniques intended to study the geology of Mars and help in the selection of samples to be collected by the mission.

About CNES

CNES is the French Space Agency, a governmental organization founded in 1961. As program-focused agency and center of technical expertise, CNES is responsible for shaping and implementing France's space policy within the framework of international cooperation, particularly within Europe. CNES is a major source of proposals which aims at maintaining and developing France and Europe's competitiveness and ensuring that they remain key players in the space domain.

LA-UR-21-22261